

34. Blocking and Tackling

In the chapter titled "Blocking and Tackling," the narrative revolves around a critical football game between the Cubs and Faith Baptist, underscoring the significance of defense and aggressive plays. The Cubs, facing a focused Faith offense, shifted their strategy and showcased a formidable defense as Trevin and Kaden executed strong tackles and nearly intercepted a pass under pressure. Despite Faith's minor successes, such as eking out a first down, the Cubs established dominance early.

A pivotal moment came when Faith attempted a basic running play led by Parker Mills. However, the defense, particularly the Adams brothers, effectively shut him down, signaling to Faith that their star running back would not find success on the field. After forcing Faith to punt for the first time, the Cubs capitalized on the opportunity, orchestrating a clever screen pass to Jory that gained significant yardage. The physical prowess of the Cubs became evident, especially as Gio made a standout play, utilizing skilled blocking to advance upfield.

The coaching wisdom highlighted in the chapter emphasizes that strong blocking and tackling often dictate the outcome of football games. The Cubs exemplified this by physically overpowering their opponents. The game intensified as Trevin scored a touchdown, extending their lead to 22–12 after demonstrating remarkable teamwork.

As Faith struggled offensively, their quarterback A. C. Swadling sustained an injury, compelling them to resort to limited strategies, which faltered against the Cubs' aggressive defense. Meanwhile, the Cubs maintained an audacious pace in their play-calling, opting for risky pass plays even as they held a lead, resulting in another touchdown for Jory after an impressive catch.

The chapter also touches on Christian Jimenez, a lineman recovering from a fractured leg, who showcased incredible fortitude by continuing to play despite significant pain. His determination helped the Cubs sustain their offensive momentum when Trevin scored again. Just before halftime, Trevin intercepted a pass from Swadling and ran it back for a touchdown, solidifying the Cubs' overwhelming lead at 42–12 by the break, leaving the question lingering if Faith could recover in the second half.